

Weekly Column for January 31, 2008

Earlier this week, we held a public meeting on Tuesday evening to discuss the road design for the Congress-Ferry Street Corridor. It was a busy night in City Hall, as the committee reviewing the proposed sale of this building met for the first time.

As you are aware, the Congress-Ferry Street project has been in the planning stages for several years. Continued hard work from all stakeholders involved, have got us to the point where we are seeking final road design from the Department of Transportation. Should everything go smoothly this summer and fall, we anticipate that construction could begin on the road design sometime this coming winter.

A copy of the draft design is available in Troy City Hall for those interested, and we continue to look for comments on the preferred option. It took two years to get to this point, but the City of Troy, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, the Troy Housing Authority, Rensselaer County have all agreed this is the plan to pursue. It limits the impact on future development, while maximizing the current footprint of the road, and increasing pedestrian safety.

Meanwhile, the developer on the project is looking to move forward with a SEQRA for the entire 13-acre Congress-Ferry Street site. Though there are still some issues to be worked out, it is my hope that the economic development portion of the project, intended to bring \$160 million of new development to a vacant swath of land, will begin at the same time as the road construction.

In a move that we believe will limit traffic nightmares for the residents and commuters that use this corridor each day, we intend to let the Upper Congress Street reconstruction at the same time as the lower. Final design approval is also being worked on for the Upper Congress Street Corridor, which technically begins a couple of hundred yards from the Lower Congress Project.

Fortunately, the construction season on both projects is expected to last only one construction season, limiting the impact on the surrounding neighborhoods.

Obviously this weekend is the big game for all the Giants fans out there. Despite my wife's allegiances to the New England Patriots, I will be pulling for the Giants this weekend. Best of luck! Have a great weekend!

Harry J Tutunjian  
Mayor of Troy